

Columbia Star  
Columbia, SC  
Circ. 824  
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4/6/2007  
67102



# <sup>135-157</sup>Aging Issues and Answers

## Telephone Assistance for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

By Lieutenant Governor André Bauer  
Lt. Governor's Office on Aging

**Question:** I've heard special telephones are available from the state for seniors who have trouble hearing. Is that true?

**Answer:** The state does offer programs that can help individuals who are hard of hearing communicate more easily via telephone. State citizens of all ages can qualify, but many people who have hearing loss related to aging could benefit from these programs.

The South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind and the State Office of Regulatory Staff administer the South Carolina Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP). This program provides telecommunications equipment free of charge to S.C. residents with qualifying disabilities. According to the information on the TEDP web ([www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/outreach/TEDP.htm](http://www.scsdb.k12.sc.us/outreach/TEDP.htm)), help is readily available to South Carolina residents who need this assistance.

Individuals who are experiencing difficulty using their current telephone equipment are encouraged to apply to receive assistive equipment through the S.C.

Telecommunications Equipment Distribution Program (TEDP). This program provides telecommunications equipment at no cost to S.C. residents with qualifying hearing, speech, blind/low vision with hearing loss, or dual sensory disabilities.

The program provides a wide range of equipment. Some examples of the equipment include amplified telephones, TTYs (teletype phones), artificial larynx and alerting devices. Training and equipment installation is provided at no charge. S.C. residents who have phone service in their home and a certified disability that causes difficulty using a standard telephone can qualify for the program. A professional must certify that the individual can benefit from special telephone equipment.

For an application and more information, contact: SCTEDP Director, S.C. School for the Deaf and the Blind, Midlands Regional Outreach Center, 101 Executive Center Drive, Suite 120, Saluda Building Columbia, SC 29210. Local: 803-896-8337 Voice: 803-896-8334 TTY Toll Free: 1-877-225-8337. Voice: 1-877-889-8337 TTY Fax: 803-896-8345 Eil: SCTEDP@scsdb.k12.sc.us.